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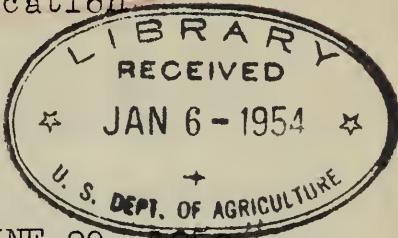
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2. U.S. Extension Service
50 Washington 25, D. C.



DIGEST OF REPLIES TO OUTLOOK CONFERENCE LETTER OF JUNE 20, 1952
(letter sent to one extension economist in each State)

I. Suggestions on General Sessions

More time should be devoted to general situation to cover fully such items as the defense program, unexpended funds from appropriations, rate of Federal expenditures, foreign situation, foreign aid programs, inflation, and general business conditions, with greater emphasis on the basic considerations and the longer-time outlook.

More speakers outside of agriculture, nongovernmental if necessary, to bring out variations in points of view. More straightforward positive statements, with fewer qualifications and reservations.

Greater interest and value would result from the home economics phase of the general program if it were devoted to a discussion of outlook and prospects, rather than historical changes in diets and living standards.

II. Suggestions on Commodity Sessions

Greater recognition of regional differences in major commodity situations.

More information on minor commodities such as peanuts, rice, cranberries, clover and grass seeds, hops, dry peas, dry beans, mint, small fruits, and truck crops.

More emphasis on the direction and magnitude of prospective changes from prices current at outlook time, rather than treated on an indefinite comparative basis with the past year or season.

Representation from an allied industry, farm organization or agricultural press.

More background material and more interpretation of the summary remarks.

Consideration of the farm management implications of the commodity situations. If summary remarks are to be read, have copies in the hands of audience at time of reading.

Fewer persons on the panels. Key presentation by BAE representatives, with others available in the audience for consultation if and when needed.

Commodity sessions held in smaller rooms to create a more informal setting for discussion purposes, and to discourage the dropping in and out of those who have only a general interest in the subject.

III. Suggestions on Regional Session

More opportunity to discuss information obtained in other sessions and consider how it fits the particular situation of the States represented.

Consider special problems of a region such as irrigation, transportation, population adjustments, shifts in demand, etc.

Sessions should not be too heavily loaded with departmental people. One key farm management man and one home management woman could adequately lead the discussions.

Length of time available makes it difficult to give sufficient treatment to problems of concern to both men and women. Greater good might come from separate sessions.

Only those phases of outlook work that are of special interest to both men and women should be discussed.

While the objectives of the joint regional sessions were good, we feel the discussions were of too general a nature to be very helpful.

As far as the joint regional sessions are concerned, I am at somewhat of a loss to make suggestions. I felt that those sessions last year were not particularly helpful, but I understand that I am pretty much alone in that feeling.

Frankly I was totally disappointed in the regional meeting last year. Much of it was a restatement of what came out of the previous general sessions.

Dispense with regional session as most people in a region get together several times during the year.

IV. Suggestions on Extension Methods Session

New and outstanding methods used in presenting outlook.

Outlook training schools for agents.

A closer tie-up of outlook work with farm and home planning or vice versa.

New techniques in visual aids. Successful plans for editing and using information adapted to radio, television, etc.

All of the time should be devoted to a discussion of outlook subject matter and methods, and not on other phases of the economics program concerning farm management, marketing, etc.

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Some discussion relating to the place of the Extension Service in outlook program. Farm people are obtaining more and more outlook information from sources other than the Extension Service.

The work on techniques and procedure in the Friday session might be altered and more emphasis given to it in the regional session. My conclusion here is based on the belief that techniques and procedures to be effective must be developed at least on a regional basis, or perhaps on a State basis. Therefore, the suggestions we receive in the Friday session are limited in value to the extent indicated.

Unless some State comes up with striking new methods, this meeting seems less and less important to those of us who have been doing outlook work for a number of years. ... This is of greater interest to young staff members. ... There might be other ways to help these people get acquainted with outlook procedure. ... It might be good to have each State prepare a page on their procedures, to be compiled into a booklet for dissemination among outlook workers.

General Comments

Name plates for those in attendance.

Go further in exchanging information on methods of price analysis. Invite State research workers for this purpose.

Exhibit of outlook bulletins and circulars prepared the previous year.

November would be better than October for the conference.

Decentralize the outlook conference and hold them at about four places throughout the country.

Eliminate all evening sessions except the banquet.

Provide one day or part of a day for conferring with individual members of the Department, and picking up material. Many do this, but have to miss some of the sessions.



